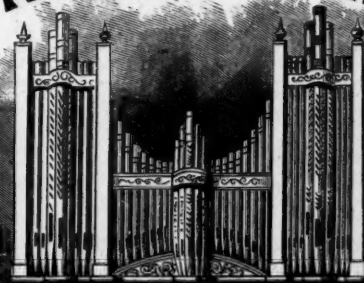


# THE NONCONFORMIST

# MUSICAL



# JOURNAL

A Monthly Record

EDITED BY  
**E. MINSHALL,**  
*Organist and Director of the Music at the  
City Temple, E.C.*

No. 4.—APRIL, 1888.

and Review.

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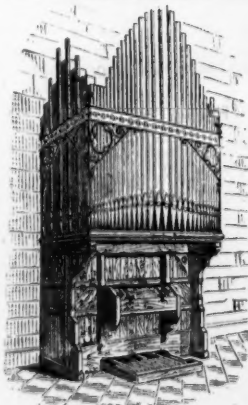
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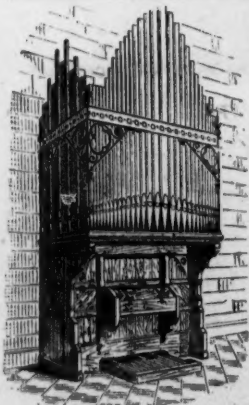
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## Nonconformist Choir Union.

We are glad to announce that the proposal to form a Nonconformist Choir Union, for the purpose of holding periodical Festivals, has been received with so much favour, that a meeting has been arranged to discuss the matter. It is to take place in the City Temple Lecture Hall (entrance in Plumtree-court, leading out of Farringdon-street), on Saturday, April 14th, at 3.30 p.m. We hope that the organists, choir-masters, and choir members of all the Nonconformist churches in London, who are interested in the movement, will make a point of being present.

## Congregational Singing.

No part of the services of the Church is more appreciated by the people than the hearty congregational singing of the hymns. It is the only act in which they can audibly join, unless a liturgy is used, consequently they estimate it at its full value. They feel its inspiration, and readily acknowledge the great influence it has upon their religious thought and feeling. They, moreover, fully admit its great attractive power in drawing into the sanctuary those who would probably never enter it for the purpose of hearing a sermon. It has likewise a wonderful effect upon the minister. In most cases good music will make good preaching, and on the other hand, if the psalmody is poor and altogether depressing, the best sermon will fail to touch the hearts of many of the congregation.

Admitting all this, is it not a startling fact that, with some notable exceptions, congregations do little or nothing to promote and encourage really good congregational psalmody? In those churches where we hear such singing, it is rarely the result of preparation, but is more an accident than anything else. Do the members of the congregation attend choir practices? Never, speaking generally, though they may be constantly urged to do so by the organist and choir. We have known a printed notice, "Members of the congregation are specially invited to attend the weekly choir practice," placed in the pews Sunday after Sunday for months together, with no response whatever. The choir meet for rehearsal every week regularly,

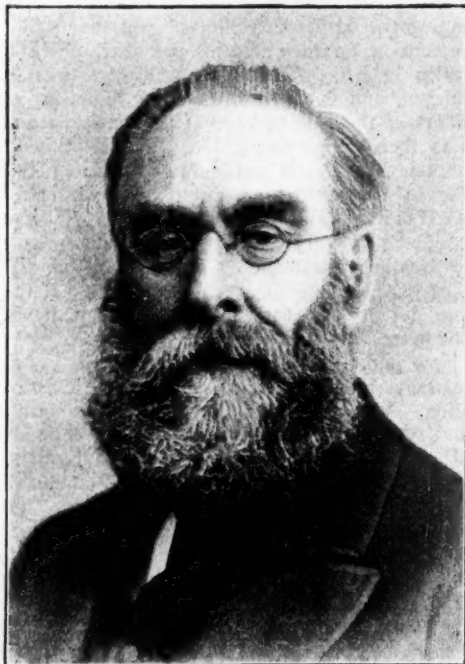
and they feel the absolute necessity for so doing, if they are to perform their part efficiently. The congregation apparently do not feel the need of preparation, for they seldom open their books till service begins. They are, however, great at criticism, and have no hesitation in letting the leaders of the singing know if the music does not go to their entire satisfaction. Mr. A thinks a tune too fast, Mr. B considers it too slow, Mr. C believes the trebles were out of tune, and Mr. D says it is not at all a congregational tune. If these excellent and very accomplished critics attended the previous practice, they may have some right to express an opinion upon the matter. If they were not present, they surely cannot, with very good grace, find fault with those who were.

How seldom we find the choir composed of the members of the well-to-do families of the congregation. Who are so suitable as the most musical and devout and those who have the greatest interest in the church? The singing is, however, frequently left to the Sunday-school scholars and others who have not had the benefit of much training. Those who belong to what are known as the "respectable" families reserve their musical abilities for the drawing-room and concert platform. They plead that choir singing injures their voice for solo purposes, and on that account they beg to be excused. Others think it is hardly dignified to sit in the same pew as their grocer or baker, and that difference of social position really must be taken into consideration. Alas that the worship-music of the churches should be deprived of valuable help for such paltry reasons as these.

It would be a happy day for our church music if the congregations could be roused from their state of indifference and made to feel that they have much to answer for, where there is not good congregational singing.

We regret to hear that there is a difficulty in procuring the NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL in some districts. The best way to overcome that difficulty is for our readers to become subscribers, as copies are then sent by first post after publication. Any local newsagent, however, will no doubt supply copies, on being informed that 44, Fleet-street is the publishing office. The journal is kept on sale by Messrs. Hart and Co., 22, Paternoster-row; Messrs. Pitman, 20, Paternoster-row; Messrs. Weekes and Co., 14, Hanover-street, Regent-street; Messrs. Marriott and Williams, 295, Oxford-street; Mr. King, music warehouse, Highbury-corner, N.; Mr. Stoneham, 79, Cheapside, 129, Cheapside, 39, Walbrook, 9, Old Broad-street, 14, New Broad-street, 27, Liverpool-street, 129, Fenchurch-street, 5, London-street, The Façade, Eastcheap, 44, Lombard-street, and at the West London Auxiliary of the Sunday School Union, 133, Edgware-road, W. It may also be procured from Mr. J. Heywood, Deansgate, Manchester, or through any of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son's bookstalls. We trust this information will enable our friends to get copies without any delay.

## The London Sunday-School Choir.



THE London Sunday-School Choir is one of the largest musical organisations in the Metropolis. Its growth has been rapid, both as regards numbers and efficiency, and never has it been in a more flourishing condition than at the present time. The credit is due entirely to the self-sacrificing devotion and energy of Mr. Luther Hinton, the genial and very able conductor of the choir (whose portrait we give above), and Mr. J. Barnard, the manager and secretary, both of whom have from the formation of the choir made it almost the object of life to promote its success.

We recently had the pleasure of having an hour's talk with Mr. Luther Hinton in reference to the work, and, as may be presumed, we found him full of enthusiasm about it.

"What was the origin of the choir?" we inquired.

"The origin was this," he replied. "About the year 1870, a friend of mine residing in North-west London wrote to me, saying that a Service of Song, entitled, 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' was to be given in Park Chapel, Camden Town, on a certain evening, and knowing I was interested in Sunday-school music, he invited me to be present. Services of Song were novelties at that time, and so I went. I found the chapel crowded, and I was much struck with the music. During the course of the evening the idea occurred to me that this same service might be given down at the East End, and I there and then resolved to carry out the idea. Shortly after this there was the usual meeting of officers and representatives of the schools in the district. Mr. Barnard, who was

secretary of the East London Auxiliary, went to the place of meeting, but being a little early found no one there. He therefore walked towards my house, and meeting me on my way to the meeting, said, 'Ah! Hinton, I want your opinion; cannot we hold a Service of Song in our district?' 'How strange,' said I! 'It is the very thing I was going to propose at the meeting to-night! I have a book in my pocket now.' Well, we walked back to the school, and the project was discussed, and, finally, it was decided to give the 'Pilgrim's Progress' at the Wesleyan Chapel, East India Road. I was to conduct, Mr. Horncastle was to accompany, and the Rev. G. Maunder was to give the consecutive readings. The performance took place June 12th, 1871. Many people thought it would be a failure, especially in the height of summer, but the chapel was packed from floor to ceiling, hundreds being turned away from the door, though premiums of 2s. 6d. were offered for tickets! Fifteen schools were represented, the choir numbering about 600. The performance was a good one upon the whole; in fact, so pleased were the audience that it had to be repeated twice within the next few weeks."

"You certainly had a successful beginning," we remarked. "How did you proceed?"

"Nothing succeeds like success," you know, so this treble performance caused a good deal of excitement amongst the Sunday-school friends in East London. On the 16th June, 1871, at a meeting in Trinity School, Poplar, it was resolved to form a society having for its purpose the following:—

"1. To cultivate and improve Part Singing amongst Sunday-school teachers and scholars, and to bring good music to their notice.

"2. To promote annual Sunday-school festivals, at which combined choirs from Sunday-schools shall take part.

"3. To encourage services of song, musical gatherings, concerts, and similar meetings being held in connection with the schools belonging to the choir, with a view of retaining the senior scholars, and also of improving the school funds.

"4. To endeavour by every means to enlist the full sympathy of the general Christian public, and the parents of Sunday-school scholars, in the great objects of Sunday-school work.

"5. To promote the unity and Christian fellowship of Sunday-school workers, irrespective of sect and denomination.

"At the annual summer excursion of the teachers of the district in 1872, I suggested that the following year we should endeavour to hold a large festival at the Crystal Palace. To put it briefly, I said, 'My friends, what say you to 15,000 persons coming to the Crystal Palace to hear 5,000 scholars sing?' The suggestion was received with the heartiest applause. As to the result I had little doubt, and on June 25th, 1873, we had our first festival on the Handel orchestra, when 67 schools and 4,613 members took part."

"Was not that a very anxious day to you?" we asked.

"Ah! I believe you. I can assure you when I

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reached the conductor's desk and saw my huge chorus before me, I shook like an aspen leaf. In two minutes after beginning, however, I was all right, for I found that my singers answered promptly to my beat. My anxiety was shared by my family, who have always taken the warmest interest in the choir. One of my boys who was eight years of age at that time was in the chorus, and on returning home his mother inquired if he had had a good dinner before singing. 'No, mother,' he replied, 'I could not eat, I was too anxious.'

"Did you find the young singers easy to conduct?"

"Yes, I must say I did. Mind you, I did not conduct upon the orthodox method, I had my own plan and in various ways tried to get effect, and I think with success. I was much amused to hear a remark made by one of the audience as to my conducting. Next to my sister sat two gentlemen. One remarked to the other: 'I say, that's rum beating. I never saw anything like that before—I can't make it out.' 'No,' replied the other; 'but if we can't make it out, it's very evident the kids can!'"

"What did you perform at that concert?"

"The Pilgrim's Progress' Service of Song, formed the first part of the programme, and some of the popular Sunday-school hymns followed. We made a great 'hit' with 'Children of Jerusalem,' out of which I got some special effects that seemed to please the people very much."

"From that day we presume you felt your choir would be a permanent thing?"

"Yes. We have gone on well since then. We have now about 8,000 members; 5,400 of whom took part in our last year's Crystal Palace Festival."

"And the quality of the music you perform has been raised, of course?"

"Oh, yes. We have discarded services of song now. Our book for this year's festival contains, amongst other things, 'The Silent Land' (Gaul), 'To Thee, Great Lord' (Rossini), 'O Glad some Light' (Sullivan), 'We never will bow down' (Handel), 'Evening' (Smart), 'Song for Spring' (Silas): so you will see we have made very considerable progress."

"We understand you have a Spring Festival at Albert Hall. Is that so?"

"Yes. About 1,600 of the best voices are selected to take part in this concert, and we usually repeat a portion of the programme of the previous summer's concert. We also engage a solo vocalist, Madame Antoinette Sterling being a great favourite with our audiences. Our band also plays several pieces. Thus we make up a good and varied programme."

"The Albert Hall concert must be a considerable risk to you surely?"

"Yes, it is. We must take at least £200 to clear expenses, and as the charge for admission is low, it takes a lot of pushing, to put us on the safe side. We are now trying to raise a guarantee fund of £100, to be invested and to be touched only in case of need. If this amount could be raised it would ease the minds of our authorities."

"We believe Mr. Kerr is your chairman, is he not?"

"Yes; he is our chairman and treasurer, and a most excellent friend he is to us. On our great festival day he delights in directing the placing of the choirs; so a considerable time before the concert begins, he takes up his position on the front of the orchestra, and under his able management the 5,000 singers are seated without fuss or trouble."

"How does your band get on?"

"Oh, very well indeed. This is their third season. They muster about fifty. Mr. John Saunders is the leader at concerts; and Mr. David Davies instructs them, Mr. Sinclair being the popular and energetic secretary. I find it is a great advantage to have a band of our own that can play accompaniments to the choruses."

"Mr. David Davies, we understand, is a very efficient organist?"

"Yes, he renders us much assistance, and is in all respects a pleasant and devoted co-worker. Mr. Horncastle, our first organist, resigned a few years ago, and since then Mr. Davies has played for us."

"How do you select and distribute your music?"

"Our system is this. The council meet in October, and each member then nominates pieces he thinks suitable. In a week or two I invite the council to my house, and after tea we select the music. Generally many more pieces are nominated than we require, so we begin by putting out the least approved of, and thus step by step, arrive at those which are chosen to form the programme for the following year's festival. These pieces are printed in a book, and we usually have 6,000 old notation and 4,000 sol-fa copies, which are distributed to the district secretaries, and are handed on by them to the various schools."

"How do you get a uniform rendering of the music?"

"In this way. As soon as the books are ready the conductors for the various districts meet me at Bishopsgate Chapel schoolroom, when we go over all the pieces and discuss the points of each. If there should be any difference of opinion as to the *tempo* or any other matter, we abide by the decision of the majority; we thus finally settle how each piece is to be taught. In course of time I go to each district and conduct a rehearsal, and then five or six weeks before the date of the festival we have what we term a 'test rehearsal' at Victoria Park Chapel, when possibly nearly 3,000 singers attend. This is to test how the pieces go when sung by a large choir. Occasionally we may have to alter the time a little, but generally we find everything goes smoothly."

"Have you ever had a breakdown?"

"No, I have not, and perhaps I may be pardoned for being proud of that fact. When you have a large body of singers—especially young ones—a false start is not an unusual occurrence, but never since the choir was formed have I had to restart a piece."

"Are we right in supposing that all service rendered in connection with the choir is gratuitous?"

"Yes. The only outlay is a small amount for rent of an office for Mr. Barnard, the secretary, and a further sum for hire of rooms for rehearsals and travelling expenses."

"No doubt you feel much indebted to Mr. Barnard?"

"Indeed we do. Though his work may not bring him so prominently before the public as some of us, he does very much to promote the success of our gatherings. The many hours of hard work he devotes to the cause, and the constant anxiety that rests upon him, deserve our fullest acknowledgment. In fact, his untiring zeal and industry make him the mainspring which gives power and force to the entire machinery."

Mr. Hinton having to attend one of his district rehearsals was compelled to hurry away, and with a hearty and bright "good-bye" he left us. We could not help feeling that in thus encouraging good music amongst the young people, Mr. Hinton and his co-workers are doing a magnificent work. The music performed is of the very best kind, and it is rendered in a truly artistic manner. Some 8,000 children are thus being taught to appreciate really good music. We sincerely trust that great prosperity may continue to be the lot of the London Sunday-School Choir, and that the unwearied efforts of all its officials may be even more fruitful in the future than they have been in the past. The warmest thanks of all Christian people are due to those who have done so much to raise the standard of sacred music in the church and school.

The Spring Festival of the choir was held in the Albert Hall, on the 24th ult., and was a great success. The chorus singing was exceedingly good, and reflected much credit upon all concerned. Mr. David Davies' "Magnificat" (a most effective setting) went with great spirit, and Sydenham's "O give thanks" was equally good. Of the part songs, "The Pilgrims" (Leslie) and "The Woods" (Abt) were the most successful. Schumann's ever-popular "Gipsy Life" proved so attractive that it had to be repeated. Madame Antoinette Sterling sang three songs, and was enthusiastically received. Mr. John Saunders played two violin solos with much taste and brilliancy, and was loudly encored. The band mustered in full force, and performed with precision a march of Handel's, and Mendelssohn's "Wedding March," besides accompanying the choruses.

### Death of Mr. James Clarke.

It is with much regret that we record the death of Mr. James Clarke, the editor and proprietor of the *Christian World*, which took place on February 24th. He was a man of broad sympathies and sound common sense, and strongly opposed to narrow-mindedness and prejudice on all religious questions. As the friend of the weak and the oppressed, he was ever ready to take up a cause which he believed to be right. Few men have done so much to encourage the proper use of music in the services of the Church.

His columns were always open for the advocacy of the improvement of our services in this respect. About two years ago he read a paper before the church at Caterham (of which he was a deacon), in which he boldly said, "Why should we not press into a Sunday evening service all the available talent in our midst, and entice the people to church by songs and solos and selections from our grand sacred oratorios? Why should it be thought that we thereby in some unintelligible way be guilty of profanation? Depend upon it, we shall have to get rid of the prevalent notion, and learn the lesson that is being taught us by some congregations that the surest way of successfully familiarising the mass of people with holy thoughts is the way of our duty, though it be never so novel. In several districts of London, and in the large towns of the North, one church after another has resolved to put mere superstition on one side, and has devised services of song other than mere hymns expressive of dogmatic theology, united with sacred readings and earnest speeches bearing on the daily thoughts and life of men, with a view to their enrichment and elevation. The reports I have received of some of these experiments tell of very great success."

The paper in its entirety was published in the *Christian World*, and called forth a long correspondence, which resulted in a Conference being held at the City Temple in the May meeting week of 1886, when Mr. Clarke presided. The verbatim report of that Conference which appeared in the *Christian World* was circulated all over the world, and caused a large amount of interest in the subject, and we believe was the means of impressing many people with the real value of good music in relation to religious services.

As we saw his body lowered to its last resting-place in Caterham Churchyard with every token of the esteem and affection of some hundreds who were present, we felt that by the death of Mr. Clarke we had lost a most powerful fellow-worker in a cause which was dear to his heart. His influence will live for many years to come.

### Should Ministers be their own Choirmasters?

By J. E.

THERE are at least two sides to the interesting question raised in the March number of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL by the Rev. J. Halsey, and answered by that gentleman in the affirmative. Let me suggest one or two reasons for holding the opinion that even where the minister is fairly or fully qualified he had better *not* be his own choirmaster. If my readers will again refer to Mr. Halsey's article they will note that (underlying rhetoric and racy illustration) the following propositions are laid down:—

1. That the study of music should be made an important part of the training of young ministers.
2. That lack of knowledge of "musical expression" in the minister must produce slovenliness in the worship.
3. That the pastor's abdication of leadership is not to be set off by even a good choirmaster.

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4. That ministerial choirmastership is essential to the complete unity of the service.

While agreeing most cordially with Mr. Halsey in his remarks so far as the desired results are concerned, I must respectfully beg to differ as regards the best methods for securing those results.

1. Musical faculty—the ability to raise even the Old Hundredth—is not always to be found in our (in every other respect most promising) students. Should students who show an unfortunate inability to reproduce correctly a succession of musical tones be “sent down” in disgrace? But one need not stop to argue that there is all the difference in the world between the ability to start a tune at a pinch in a religious service or at a Dorcas meeting, and the special skill and culture requisite for efficient choirmastership. It is more than probable that good choirmasters are, like poets, “born—not made”; and Mr. Halsey is not evincing his logic when he makes his exceptional ability in the musical sphere a criterion for his less fortunate brethren, who will, I fear, not overflow with gratitude to him for suggesting an increase in their already numerous and varied duties. As an old precentor I may be expected to hold that, no matter how highly qualified the pastor may be, the choirmastership, with all the special duties it entails, had best be left in other hands. Unquestionably, musical knowledge, like knowledge on every other conceivable subject, is invaluable to a minister. A peculiarity of the late Henry Ward Beecher was the way in which he laid the whole realm of general information under tribute, and his wealth of knowledge on all sorts of subjects was focussed, so to speak, on his work as a preacher. May I say in parenthesis that many of our students would derive a world of benefit (and be hereafter better able to manage the inevitable “cantankerous deacon”) from some acquaintance with business life—say twelve months in a wholesale firm to study method, and six months with a retail firm to develop patience. But the possession of musical knowledge, while it renders the kindly suggestions and friendly criticisms of the minister of more value as applied to the work of psalmody, need not, and should not, I think, involve a monopoly or a usurpation, if the word may be used without offence, of the special functions of the director of the music. I am, no doubt, getting a little antiquated in my notions, but I believe there was sound common sense (at the very lowest estimate) in the decision at which after due consideration the Apostles arrived when they stated that it was “not meet that they should leave the word of God, and serve tables.” The analogy may not be complete; but is not the principle involved worth considering in these busy times, when ministers tell us that they have neither time nor strength for pastoral visitation?

2. It would be quite easy for me to show that the widest popularity and largest usefulness—combined with the most bright and effective services as a whole—have been co-existent with great inefficiency in musical matters in the case of many ministers of the Gospel. Many organists and choirmasters could testify that this is simply a matter of fact. And yet among ministers who “couldn’t sing a note” there has often

been noted extreme sensitiveness as regards the conduct of the psalmody, often expressed in warm words of appreciation of the helpfulness of good singing, or by expressions of disappointment where the music may have been unworthy of its object.

3. A really competent choirmaster, in undoubted sympathy with religious worship and in frequent communication with the pastor respecting the work in hand, ought to be far and away the best judge on the spot in all matters of musical taste or opinion. To him, rather than to the minister, should complaints and complainers—I pass by the smaller class who applaud—be referred. Musical critics and criticisms, now that every house boasts a piano, are simply legion; and I am sadly arriving at the charitable opinion that the willingness to pronounce off-hand on the merits of church psalmody is sometimes in inverse ratio to the amount of knowledge specially brought to bear on the matters under consideration. And where a minister is held personally responsible, not only for the conduct of the devotions and the depth and eloquence of the sermon, but also for the “go” of the singing, verily I am sorry for him. Division of labour is surely advisable in this, as in other departments; and an officer of music, trusted by and directly responsible to the church, is, I think, infinitely preferable to a choirmaster-pastor, however efficient. For in our church psalmody annals, has it never occurred that offences have arisen—little misunderstandings between organist and singers, whose “touchiness” has become proverbial? And in such cases who so likely, other things being equal, to smooth over and arrange, and if may be heal the differences, as the pastor? But what if he be himself, as choirmaster, the offender or the offended one? It will be then surprising if “the rift,” with all its unpleasant consequences, does not extend beyond the musical domain. And again, the training of a thorough choirmaster must involve larger opportunities of observation and more time for purposes of musical culture than would fall to the lot of most ministers. I once heard a witty parson deplore that for many years he had been deprived of the privilege of “sitting under” any one other than himself. I cannot say whether the good man also “sat on” the choir.

4. The unity of the service—voluntaries, psalmody, readings, sermon—is of great importance. But while the chief burden of thinking out and pre-arranging a service must rest on the minister, may not the responsibility be shared by willing, competent, sympathetic hands, without loss of unity or danger of discord? Who knows whether choirmasters may not have a word to say on this point in self-defence?

“Cantankerous deacons” have not as yet ceased from troubling, and there be many “one-idea’d musical people,” but what choirmaster ever suffered a moment’s inconvenience through contact with an unbusiness-like, or crotchety, or petulant parson?

And I am not aware that our churches have been often guilty of overrating the services of those who, at much expenditure of time and labour, have prepared and conducted the psalmody. It is easy to see how, through a natural and laudable desire to “magnify their office,” choirmasters should have had, in self-defence, to appear in some cases unduly self-assertive.



And while so much of the conduct of the services—often strangely *uncongregational*—is entirely in the hands of our ministers, some of whom (by omitting important verses in our hymns, for instance) too frequently tread upon the corns of their musical friends, the pastors must not complain if their private intercourse with choirmasters is occasionally a little overcast or breezy. And may not the absence of “unity and sympathy” be the result of some remissness on the part of Nonconformist churches, in not cultivating and developing the musical talent in their own ranks? so that while young people with real musical ability have been overlooked and practically driven into other communities to exercise their gift, organists and choirmasters have been sought for among people who have shown little sympathy with religious worship. For where showy performers on the organ, who seem “neither to fear God nor regard man,” are entrusted with the psalmody arrangements, they sooner or later become the occasion of no end of trouble to both pastor and people. It may still be possible, in a sense, “to go down into Egypt for help.”

It may be that if more attention than has in past days been given were devoted to the mental and moral qualifications of our music masters, there would soon be less reason than now appears for ministers (in the interests of order and unity) becoming their own choirmasters.

### A United Congregational Musical Festival.

LANCASHIRE is noted for its love of music, but strange to say, in the matter of congregational singing in its churches—its Nonconformist churches, at all events—it has much room for improvement. Lovers of music in the three Congregational churches of Burnley, and also the neighbouring sister churches in Brierfield, Nelson, Barrowford, and Colne, have recently inaugurated a movement which will not fail, if persevered in, to exercise a great and salutary influence upon congregational psalmody in the churches of this district. A united musical festival for the rehearsal of congregational hymn-tunes, chants, and anthems was held in Westgate Congregational Church, Burnley, on Saturday, March 10th, under the conductorship of the Rev. J. Horatio Johnes, of Haslingden. The choirs of the above-named churches numbering about 140 members, besides leading the congregational singing, rendered also, with marked effect, several anthems, viz., “Send out Thy light” (*Gounod*); “O, taste and see” (*Goss*); and Beethoven’s “Hallelujah to the Father.” Farmer’s “Te Deum” was also sung by the choirs, but it is to be hoped the different congregations will in time be able to join in it in the service of the Lord’s House. But the chief feature of the festival was the rehearsal of *congregational* music. The order of merit in which the different parts of the service were rendered may be expressed thus: The psalm tunes were more generally joined in and in every way better sung than the chants, and the chants better than the congregational anthems.

There are few congregations that are able to chant

well, and fewer still that join in the anthems, and yet were it simply for the sake of variety in the musical part of divine service, it is well worth persevering with them and trying to get the congregations to take a more intelligent interest in both—especially in the chant. The leaders of music in our churches are to blame for the present unfortunate method of chanting. Instead of teaching the people that chanting is simply reciting in musical notes, they have taught them, or, at least, they have allowed them, to hurry on, regardless of emphasis and expression, to the last word of the “recitative,” on which they stop, although, perhaps, that is the least important word in the sentence; and in some cases not even a word at all, but a termination, or even the prefix of the first word in the cadence! The effect, of course, is simply ludicrous. Mr. Johnes made a valiant attempt to get the choirs and congregation in this festival to emphasise the chief word in the recitatives, and not altogether without success. But it is so difficult to persuade folks that the right way of doing anything is better than a wrong way. Altogether, however, the festival, for a first attempt, was a decided success, and the inquiry, since it was held, is general: “When are we going to have another?” Apart from the stimulus it has given to congregational singing in the churches, it has had a good effect in drawing together the various congregations and choirs, and in promoting fraternal sympathy and co-operation among them. The devotional part of the service was conducted by the Revs. J. R. Richards, Nelson, T. R. Davies, Burnley; and J. B. Parry, Burnley (Secretary of the Association). Short addresses were also delivered by Revs. E. Gough, B.A., Barrowford; and O. Thomas, M.A., Holywell. Mr. J. Pickles, the organist of Westgate Congregational Church, was a most efficient accompanist, and rendered much valuable assistance. James Kay, Esq., J.P., Burnley, presided over the meeting.

### Experiences of a Musical Church House.

#### II.

AT the end of my paper in last month’s Journal, I said I would perhaps give an account of a certain choir which came under my notice a little while ago, but I was afraid of being late at my rehearsal, and so stopped rather abruptly. The Editor of the Journal kindly says I may give my account this month; only he says, really I *must not* rattle on so.

Well, well, I will try to be sober, but you know, Mr. Editor, mice are naturally so vivacious that they cannot be serious for more than two minutes at a time.

Before I give my description of that choir, I may perhaps be allowed to make a few remarks on something I have noticed in reference to choirs in Nonconformist churches generally. You know it is these churches we have to do with at present, and I am a Nonconformist mouse—don’t laugh, good reader. I can assure you many of us “go in” for Disestablishment (of the larder), and Disendowment (of the cook and housemaid)—aye, and for “Home Rule” too, as strongly as any of you humans.

Now, I find that of recent years, choirs composed of boys and men have become much more common than they used to be. I like little boys, and it is very sweet to hear them when they sing nicely, and not through their noses, or their teeth, or down in their stomachs. But there is this great drawback to them, that when you have trained them so nicely, and they begin to be really useful, they either take themselves off to a church where they will get better pay, or their voices what you call "break"—I should say *develope*, or split into two parts, one high and squeaky, and the other deep and gruff, so that they seem to be singing a *duet* all alone—it's very funny. But out of the four or five choirs composed of boys that I have heard in Nonconformist churches, I cannot say that one could be called entirely satisfactory, although I admit that in one or two cases they sang very well. But in each case a few of the dental or nasal-toned voices spoilt the rest. The fact is, that only in cathedrals or large churches where daily service and practice is held, and the boys are always under musical training, can a really satisfactory result be obtained. I fear it can never be done in our churches; there is not the means or opportunity to give this training. Then boys, unless very fully and incessantly practised in details, will never sing with much expression. They are naturally thoughtless, and could not be trusted to give spontaneous expression to the hymns, but would always need precise directions as to when and where to vary their tones. So I conclude that unless much more training and constant oversight can be given to boys it is best to have ladies; and perhaps for other reasons also. But even ladies (forgive me, dear lady readers, I don't mean to be rude), even ladies, I say, are not *always* perfect, as I fear I shall have occasion to point out. I have observed that sometimes they do not use much judgment in the matter of expression, or seem to enter with much warmth into the spirit of the service. But enough of "generalising."

Now about this choir, which I think I have mentioned once or twice before. It is composed of ladies and gentlemen, no boys being admitted. The members are some of them young, and some—no, no, not *old*,—I didn't say that. Let us say, not so young as they once were. And, mind you, the older members, who have had at least some experience, are usually better after all than the young upstarts who think they know everything before they are twenty.

But I like fresh young voices, if the owners of them are not *too* clever, and will be content to learn and gain their experience as their grandfathers and grandmothers did before them.

Well, there are odd differences in this choir, as I suppose there are in most choirs. There are some who always come late, and make a fine bustle in getting into their places, finding their books, etc.; others are always early, and quiet and decorous in demeanour. Some must have a little chat with a neighbour just before the voluntary ends, or even between the parts of the service, or even during the sermon if they are ensconced in a quiet corner; while some are so rigid and stand-offish, they never condescend to speak to any one. One or two consider themselves very supe-

rior, and think the church ought to be very much obliged to them for condescending to sing in the choir, whilst others, I am glad to say, deem it at once a pleasure and honour to help.

Then they have very different ways of singing. Some put their noses into their books, and sing in a soft, confidential manner to them; others hold up their heads and roar, or send their voices flying over the heads of the rest, so that *their* presence at least shall be manifest. If the organ is softened down for sake of variety or expression, some collapse altogether, being frightened lest their voices should be observed; others think, "Now is *our* chance to be heard," and redouble their efforts, so that the organist's attempt at *pianissimo* is nonplussed. Then one lady always flies on ahead, while a deep bass is constantly dragging back, like the donkey that wouldn't go. One gets flat on a certain note, another if the weather is damp, another if the weather is warm. So many and various are the tricks and cranks of the members, that about the only thing in which they agree is in each (with one or two exceptions, perhaps) thinking that he or she is so clever and efficient that to practise such things as hymns and chants is quite unnecessary, and to suggest it is almost an impertinence. They say they "know the tunes," or, if they don't exactly know them, they can get through them somehow—isn't that all you want? My idea, however, is that to "know the tune," even if they *do* know it, is only the first step, and I can see from my quiet retreat under the pulpit that these angularities and peculiarities would all disappear, and the singing, instead of grinding and creaking like a rusty lock, would go smoothly and sweetly as a well-oiled machine, if they would only come together and get rubbed down and polished up by rehearsal.

The consequence of this state of things in the choir is that it is as much as can be done to get safely through the hymns, and attention to phrasing or expression is impossible. If the hymn is an unfamiliar one, and, as sometimes perversely happens, the tune also is not well known, some are only able to keep it going by dwelling for a few notes now and then on the vowels, so that "sound" and not "sense" is heard. And in the chants—oh, dear! what a scramble, confusion, and jerking there is to get the words in, or to get them out! Instead of clear, distinct enunciation, which might be attained with proper practice, the words are gabbled until the end of the recitation is reached, when a sudden pull-up occurs, whether on the right word or not may be as it happens, and then a bolt for the cadence.

So goes on the choir in many a church, more or less, for this is a specimen of a class that I find too largely represented. I might say something about the odd choice of tunes and the kind of hymns used in our churches, and perhaps next month I may be allowed by our good Editor to give my ideas on those points. Meantime, *au revoir*.

THE choir was sadly out of tune on a certain Sunday morning, and after rendering an opening hymn most execrably, the minister announced for the first lesson Acts xx., beginning, "And when the uproar had ceased."

## Children and Music.

BY THE EDITOR.

*An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Council and Delegates of the London Sunday School Choir.*

FEW persons will deny that a sweet melody, simply but tenderly sung by a little child, is a message from heaven; how far the effects of such a song extend it is utterly impossible to say. Many a home has been transformed from an unholy into a holy place through the influence of "one of these little ones." The song of a child has soothed many a sorrowful heart, and banished many a terrible fear. Music, moreover, has a wonderful power over the child itself. With very few exceptions every infant has a natural desire to sing, and in due time makes an attempt to do it. It depends upon the ear how far the result is successful, but certain it is that nearly every child is endowed by nature with a gift of song.

Then, passing a stage further on, we find—

"The whining schoolboy, with his satchel,  
And shining morning face, creeping like a snail  
Unwillingly to school."

Though going "unwillingly" he almost invariably whistles a tune by the way. The ploughman is proverbially known as whistling to encourage his horses, and to relieve the monotony of his work. All through life, therefore, from the infant just able to talk, to the old man whose course is nearly run, there is a love of song, and a natural desire to join in it.

That being so, it is most certainly our duty to see that the love of the best kind of music should be early implanted in the hearts of the children, for upon that the future very largely depends. The senseless ditties that I have occasionally heard children sing (such as what are known as "comic songs"), though possibly harmless at that stage of the child's development, create in the young man a craving for such insane rubbish as "Two lovely black eyes," or "Champagne Charlie," and many other such like songs. It is really lamentable to think how much patronage is bestowed upon the music halls, where such trash is nightly performed by singers described as "England's Only Comic," or "The Charming Sophia," or some other equally ridiculous name. It is an insult to the divine art that such places should be called *Music-halls*. Call them *Noise-halls*, or *Vice-halls* if you will, but all lovers of the sacred art protest against music being associated with such unseemly and inartistic performances.

In teaching children, therefore, to love and appreciate the best kind of music, we cannot tell how far the benefit of that instruction will extend. A choir-master, who has had large experience in teaching boys for his church choir, recently told me that though he may know the boys long before they come under his instruction, he notices a great difference in their faces and in their general appearance after they have been in the choir for a time. Their faces assume a more spiritual look, and their general demeanour becomes more gentle and amiable. The same idea has been set to music by Sir Arthur Sullivan, in the well-known song, "The Chorister":

"O sweet and dim the light and shade,  
Across the minster stealing;  
I heard the grand old organ played,  
The anthem upward pealing.  
One boy's sweet voice above the rest  
I heard so clearly ringing,  
The angels must his dream have blest,  
To teach him such sweet singing.

"His earnest eyes to heaven were bent,  
With yearning pure and lowly  
To follow where his singing went,  
And join the angels holy.  
No gentle mother's love had he,  
But God had comfort given,  
For he might sing on earth, and she  
Might hear her child in heaven.

"Last night I dreamt of harps of gold,  
Heaven's gates were roll'd asunder,  
I saw the grave sweet face of old  
Upraised in joy and wonder.  
He sings among the angels now,  
Beside the crystal river,  
The light of God is on his brow  
For ever and for ever."

Then our churches depend to a great extent upon the rising generation to supply the choirs with singers. The Sunday-school is the nursery for the church choir. As a choir-master I can say that some of my best singers are those who were first trained in the Sunday-school.

And may I here remark how pleased we all ought to be that in hymn books recently compiled by the various denominations, a goodly space has been devoted to "Hymns for the Young," and not only so, but that in many of our places of worship where children form a large proportion of the congregation, one of these hymns is always sung at the morning service. In some cases a short sermon or address is also given to the children, and where the minister is well qualified for such work it is an excellent arrangement.

Assuming then that we all agree as to the wisdom and duty of teaching children music, we will consider

### HOW CHILDREN SHOULD BE TAUGHT.

Many plans are adopted at the various Sunday-schools throughout the kingdom, some good, and some certainly bad. In some instances it seems to be thought that as they are only children who are to be taught it does not matter very much how they are taught or who teaches them. This is a very common but a very grave mistake. People who argue so, forget that they are sowing seeds which will bring forth fruit for a whole lifetime. It is not something just for the time being which is quickly forgotten, but it is lasting and affects the whole life of the child. What would be thought of a man who in building a house declined to put any solid foundation, thinking the bare soil was enough to build upon? By the time he got to the roof he would find his building falling to pieces and all his outlay so much wasted money. Precisely so in teaching children. If they are not taught correctly and upon right principles in the first instance, an irremediable injury is being done. The first thing is to have a competent instructor. Very frequently the duties are undertaken by the superintendent. Now he may be a very estimable man, and



in every way a most efficient superintendent, but it does not follow that he is *necessarily* a good teacher of music any more than it follows that a good choirmaster is a good preacher. There may be some few cases here and there, where the capabilities to undertake the duties of superintendent and music teacher may be found in one man, but as a general rule I am strongly of opinion that the instruction in singing should be entrusted to a person about whose qualification for the post there can be no doubt. I have met with most incompetent teachers—men who not only were ignorant of the most elementary rules of music, but who, by their uncultured manners, did the children a positive injury. Upon one occasion, a few years ago, I had to accompany a choir of children (belonging to some association in the south of London), who were to sing at their annual meeting to be held in the City Temple. This is the way in which the conductor, with an abominable nasal twang, addressed his juvenile vocalists at the rehearsal: "Now then, lads, the next piece on the programme is 'Lord of the livin' arvest.' Now, lads, it's a biggish place, so shout it out and let 'em 'ave it. Now altogether, 'Lord of the livin' arvest.'" During the practice some of the youngsters did not appear to be singing to the satisfaction of this very accomplished and cultured conductor, so he addressed them in his style: "Now, gals and boys, are you come 'ere to sing or to play? If you've come to sing, why in the world don't you open your mouths and let 'em 'ave it? If you've come to play, the sooner the better you shut up and go." It is a positive sin to place such men in charge of children. If amongst the teachers connected with the school no one can be found able to undertake the work an outsider must be found. Very frequently before a festival or an anniversary, the organist or choirmaster of the church comes in for a few Sundays to prepare the necessary music. This is an admirable arrangement in various ways, and if he could be persuaded to take charge of the music regularly the result would probably be satisfactory.

(To be continued.)

## Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 20th of the month.)

### METROPOLITAN.

**BAYSWATER.**—A very interesting entertainment, consisting of illustrations of Congregational Psalmody, was given in the Wesleyan Chapel on February 23rd. The following was the programme:—Ancient Jewish Melody—"Leoni"; Hymns of the Early Latin Church—"Gregorian Tone," "Ephratah"; Crusaders' Hymn—"Ascalon"; Tunes of the Reformation—"Tallis," "St. Edmund"; Lutheran Chorale—"Worms"; Huguenot Melody—"Toulon"; Tunes of the Eighteenth Century Religious Revival—"Invitation," "Hindley," "Solomon," "Hull," "Hymn of Eve"; Old Methodist Tunes—"Denmark," "Comfort," "Oatlands," "Nativity," "Eccles"; Modern Tunes—"St. Petersburg," "St. Vincent," "The Foe Behind, No. 1," "St. Anatolius, No. 2." Instrumentalists:—Organ, Mr. Wetton; flute, Mr. F. Pecover; first violins, Mr. Smith, Mr. W. Smith, Mr. D. James, Mr. Tomlin; second violins, Miss Nellie Heal, Mr. Bland, Mr. Beardon, Master Angell; violoncello, Mr. Heal; double bass, Mr. Pecover. The tunes

were taken from the "Wesleyan Tune Book," the "Bristol Tune Book," and "Old Methodist Tunes." The congregation were invited to join in the singing of most of the tunes. "Tallis" was sung in Elizabethan style, one line being given out at a time, and the "Gregorian Tone" was sung by male voices only. One verse of the "Hymn of Eve" (Dr. Arne) was sung as a solo, to show its ballad origin; "Hull," another tune of secular birth, was sung at a lively pace, whilst "Nativity" was started with an old-fashioned pitch-pipe, to illustrate the method of raising tunes before musical instruments were introduced into Methodist chapels. The elaborate tune, "Denmark," furnished the instrumentalists with an opportunity of showing their skill. The choir (about forty voices) and the band were ably conducted by Mr. W. F. Walters, organist of the church. Mr. Wm. Rayner, the choirmaster, was the lecturer, and he endeavoured to trace the origin and history of congregational singing from ancient Jewish times, when King David formed a choir to sing thanksgiving, and appointed Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, "the Master of the Song," unto the present day. The characters of each style of church-music were explained in chronological order, and a musical illustration given. Appropriate anecdotes brightened up the lecture, which was well received throughout.

**CAMDEN TOWN.**—The last of the winter series of "Services of Song for the People" was given at Park Chapel on Feb. 29th, under the direction of Mr. C. Darnton, the organist. This concludes the thirteenth consecutive season of these popular services, and the chapel was, as usual, well filled by an interested audience. Solos were included, sung by Miss Adeline Davies, who gave Cowen's "The better land," Gounod's "There is a green hill," and Handel's "Angels ever bright and fair," with organ and harp accompaniments, the former by Mr. E. Drewett, A.C.O. (who has acted as accompanist throughout the season), and the latter by Mrs. Bayly. The other pieces included were Spohr's "As pants the hart" (solo and chorus), Stainer's "What are these," the "Gloria" from Mozart's Twelfth Mass, etc., besides three hymns by the whole assembly. An earnest and suitable address was given, as is customary in these services, by the Rev. J. C. Harrison, the esteemed pastor, who also read the Scriptural passages between the various musical numbers, as prepared by the director. Mr. Drewett played the overture to the "Occasional Oratorio" at the close of the service.

**CRAVEN HILL.**—A good performance of Mendelssohn's "Lauda Sion" and Rossini's "Stabat Mater" was given in the Congregational Church on the 8th ult. by the Bayswater Choral Society. The accompaniments were played by the Bayswater Orchestral Society, the vocalists being Miss Adelaide Mullen, Miss Jessie King, Mr. Charles Chilley, and Mr. Robert Hilton. Mr. Harkness Lait conducted and Mr. Fred Noakes was an efficient organist.

**DARTMOUTH PARK.**—A new organ has been placed in the Primitive Methodist Chapel.

**HIGHBURY.**—On Friday, March 9th, the members of the Quadrant Church had a social meeting to bid farewell to Mr. R. G. Norman and family, on their departure for Ireland. Mr. Norman, who has for six years been choirmaster and conductor of the Choral Society, was presented with an address and a purse of £50. Presentations were also made to the Misses Norman.

**MILE END.**—Mendelssohn's "Elijah" was excellently performed at the Great Assembly Hall on Saturday, March 3rd, before a large audience. The soloists were Madame Clara West, Miss Lottie West, Madame Osborne Williams, Mr. John Probert, Mr.

Thomas Cassidy, Mr. Jas. Blackney, and Mr. Thomas Kempton. Mr. Day Winter conducted.

STRATFORD.—At the recent Musical Festival four Congregational church choirs competed in the class for mixed-voice church choirs. They were: Upton (Mr. Donald), Plaistow (Mr. Hills), Forest-gate (Mr. Mellis), and Leyton (Mr. Brown). The prize was won by the Upton choir; Dr. Bridge, organist of Westminster Abbey, being the adjudicator. It is hoped that the Congregational choirs of the district may form a union and hold a yearly festival.

THE CITY TEMPLE.—At the distribution of prizes in connection with the recent Scholars' Industrial Exhibition, the school children sang several pieces, accompanied by the newly-formed orchestral band.

TOLLINGTON PARK.—The Choral Society in connection with New Court Chapel gave good renderings of Rossini's "Stabat Mater" and Cowen's "Rose Maiden" on Friday, Feb. 24th, the soloists being Madame Clara West, Miss Rose Dafforne, Mr. E. Bryant, and Mr. W. G. Forington. Accompanist, Miss A. Dearden. Conductor, Mr. T. Bound. There was a full room, notwithstanding the severity of the weather.

UPPER TOOTING.—A sacred concert, under the direction of Mr. J. H. Robinson, with Mr. C. E. Mudie as organist, was given in the Congregational Baptist Church, Trinity-road. The solos were well rendered, and the choruses were sung with much spirit. The concert was one of the best ever given in the neighbourhood.

#### PROVINCIAL.

ADDISCOMBE.—The Sunday afternoon musical services at Christ Church continue to be largely attended and much appreciated.

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH.—Miss Violet Edwards has been presented with a testimonial as a recognition of her services as organist of the Congregational Church.

BANGOR.—The choral festival of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Churches in this district was held on March 7th in the Tabernacle Church. The choirs, conducted by Mr. John Thomas, of Llanwrtyd, numbered nearly 900 voices. The Rev. D. Rowlands, M.A., presided in the afternoon, and Mr. R. Evans at night.

BARNESLEY.—A new organ is to be placed in Sheffield Road Chapel, at the cost of Alderman E. Wood, who has also promised an additional £100 towards providing increased school accommodation.

BATH.—A new organ was opened by Dr. Bridge on the 1st ult., in Argyle Chapel.

BIRKENHEAD.—The Rev. Rigby Murray's "Revised Psalter" is to be introduced into the services at Grange Road Presbyterian Church.

CHESHAM.—A performance of the cantata, "A Day with our Lord," has been given in the Baptist Chapel, on behalf of the Vale Chapel Building Fund.

GATESHEAD.—At the annual re-union of the Congregational Church, Mr. W. Bird, the organist, gave an address on "The Importance of Church Praise."

GRANTHAM.—A new organ, costing about £275, has been placed in the Congregational Church, of which Rev. F. W. B. Weeks is pastor. Dr. Allon preached the sermon upon the occasion of the opening.

DARTMOUTH.—A new organ, costing over £200, has been erected in the Congregational Church.

HALIFAX.—On Wednesday, March 14th, a service in connection with the Congregational Choral Union was held in Park Church, Halifax, the minister of the church (the Rev. J. R. Bailey) presiding. All the Congregational churches of the town were represented in the choir and congregation. The lessons were read by Revs. E. A. Lawrence and T. Keyworth. Prayer was offered by Rev. K. Walden. The Lord's Prayer

was chanted. The air from Mendelssohn's "Elijah," "Woe unto them," was sung by Miss Poyson, of the Park choir; and the anthem, "Blessed are they that dwell in Thine house" (A. T. Page), by the united choirs. A devotional service from the Rev. John Hunter's book was read by Mr. Bailey, choir and congregation responding. The Rev. J. Lightfoot, M.A., D.Sc., Vicar of Cross Stone, Todmorden, gave an address on "Music in its relation to the Spiritual Life."

HALTON.—The members of the Wesleyan Chapel Choir recently gave an excellent rendering of Shinn's "Captives of Babylon," with full band accompaniment. The solos were well sung by Miss Ada Wood, Miss Kate Taylor, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Jackson, Mr. J. W. Crosthwaite, and Mr. G. Crosthwaite. The choruses went with much spirit. Mr. W. Green was the able conductor.

HOLYWELL.—"Church Psalmody" was the title of a very capital paper read by Mr. P. Harding Roberts, at a meeting of the Tabernacle Mutual Improvement Society.

HULL.—The Annual Choir Sunday was observed at Fish Street Congregational Church on the 11th ult. There were choral services morning and evening, and the Rev. H. Elvet Lewis preached twice on the subject of Church-song.

—A sacred concert was given in the Spring Bank Presbyterian Church on Thursday evening, February 23rd, 1888, on behalf of the Sunday-school. The following were amongst the pieces sung: Anthem, "The Lord is my Shepherd" (Macfarren), "He shall feed His flock" (Messiah). Contralto, Miss Moffatt; Soprano, Miss King. Anthem, "Lord, for Thy tender mercies sake" (Farrant), "Incline Thine ear" (Himmel). Bass solo, Mr. Milne, "Turn Thy face from my sins" (Attwood), and "Arise, shine, for Thy light is come" (Sir G. Elvey). The solos, "Come unto Me" (Lindsay), by Mr. Carmichael; "Too late" (Lindsay), by Miss King; "The Minstrels of Heaven" (Clark Morrison), by Miss Kyle; and "The Lost Chord," by Miss Purdie, were well received, as were also the following organ solos by Mr. Dant, the organist, viz., Prelude and Fugue in B flat (Bach); the Hymn of Nuns (Wely); Evening Prayer (H. Smart); Grand March in G (Dr. Frost); and the Hallelujah Chorus (Handel). The concert was a most successful one, and resulted in clearing the Sunday-school of debt, great credit being due to Mr. Dant, the organist and choirmaster.

MANCHESTER.—A service of song, entitled "Pictures from the Life of Jesus," was given to a crowded congregation at the Presbyterian Mission, City Road (in connection with the Grosvenor Square Presbyterian Church). The service was repeated on the following Thursday.

NEWTOWN, MONTGOMERYSHIRE.—A grand musical competition is to be held here on Friday, June 22nd next, in aid of the funds of the Baptist Chapel. The chief choral competition is for choirs numbering not less than sixty nor more than eighty voices. The pieces to be sung are, "The Lord for ever reigneth" (D. Jenkins), and "O, snatch me swift" (Callowell). The prize is £30. A similar prize is also offered in a Brass Band Competition. Mr. E. Minshall is to be the adjudicator. Full particulars may be had from Mr. E. P. Morris, Hon. Sec., Woodside, Newtown, Montgomeryshire.

NORTHAMPTON.—An organ recital was given in Commercial Street Chapel, on the 19th ult., by Mr. E. Minshall. A very good performance, of Dr. Spark's cantata, "Immanuel," was also given, under the direction of Mr. E. J. Biggs, Mr. H. Bowles being an efficient accompanist. The solos were well rendered by Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Oates, Mr. Cosford, and Mr. W. H. Tarry.

OAKHILL.—Miss Mary Bennett, the organist of the Congregational Church, has been presented with a travelling clock in recognition of her services.

SOUTH SHIELDS.—Mr. J. S. Bell, choirmaster of St. John's Presbyterian Church, has been presented with a valuable timepiece by the choir and a few friends.

—On the 14th ult. the oratorio "Josiah" was performed at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, by the choir of the church, assisted by a number of friends. The various solos and recitatives were given by members of the choir as follows:—Miss Davison, Miss M. Davison, Miss Morrison, Miss J. Morrison, Miss Hunter, Miss Crosbie, Miss M. Crosbie, Miss Lockyer, Miss Rowe, Mr. T. Y. Crosbie, Mr. C. Ramsay, Mr. J. O. Davison, Mr. R. Hall, Mr. T. G. Hutchinson, Mr. G. E. Hogg, and Master Jas. Crosbie. The quartette party included Miss A'lexander, Miss Gates, Mr. J. S. Hardie, and Mr. H. Gunn. The whole of the solos were given in a creditable manner, and were highly appreciated by the audience. Special mention may be made of the solo "Blessed are the Dead," by Master J. Crosbie, who received an encore for the rendering of this piece. The choruses, which were sung by the full choir, were rendered in a splendid manner, showing careful training. The manner in which Miss Cummings played the introduction, and accompanied the whole of the oratorio, deserves very great praise. The Rev. J. G. Walton, B.D., officiated as chairman, and Mr. J. R. Cummings, L.T.S.C., Precentor, conducted the choir.

STANNINGLEY.—Special services were held in connection with the re opening of the Congregational Church, including a service of praise, consisting of selections from "The Messiah."

TORQUAY.—On Wednesday, March 14th, a lecture, entitled, "The Father of the Symphony: Joseph Haydn, his Life and Works," was given in the Institute, Fleet Street, by Mr. Orlando G. Mansfield, Mus.Bac., T.C.T., F.C.O., etc., organist of Trinity Church. The audience, which completely filled the building, was thoroughly appreciative. Selections from Haydn's works were performed on the pianoforte and violin by Mrs. O. A. Mansfield (Mdlle. Jutz) and Mr. J. Sparke. The proceeds were devoted to the funds of the Young Women's Christian Association.

TREDEGAR.—Miss Phillips has been presented by the members of Castle-street Church with a purse of gold in recognition of her services as organist.

WITHERINGTON.—The fourth and last of the series of musical evenings, given by the choir of the Congregational Church, took place on Saturday, March 3rd, in the lecture-room, when there was a large attendance. Mr. Wood occupied the chair, and, in the course of a few opening remarks, said he hoped, before another season, a larger and more convenient room would be provided for these gatherings. The programme opened with a pianoforte solo, "Lucrezia" (Oesten), by Miss Crockford, who, with Mr. Cunningham, also contributed Gounod's "Meditation," for piano and violin. The vocalists were Miss I. Lockett, who sang "Will he come"; Mrs. Murray, whose songs were "Tis I" and "My Lady's Bower." Mrs. Workman sang "Olivia," and Mr. Cochran "King of the Night." The trio, "I Naviganti," was given by Mrs. Workman, Mrs. Murray, and Mr. Buss. Mr. Cunningham played a gavotte, accompanied by Miss Crockford on the piano, both the latter items being deservedly encored. The glees contributed were "Sunset," "Silent Night," "From Oberon," and the "Venetian Boat-Song," all of which well merited the applause given them. Mr. Wood, the chairman, added largely to the enjoyment of the evening by giving two readings. His selection for the first part was the "Signalman," and for the second a humorous American piece. The enjoyable programme

concluded by singing a verse of the National Anthem. The warmest thanks of the congregation are due to Mr. J. K. Dearden, the honorary organist, for providing these very agreeable opportunities for social intercourse during the winter months, and if numbers are any criterion his efforts are appreciated.

## Correspondence.

(We shall be glad to receive communications from any of our readers on questions likely to be of general interest.)

### SINGING "AMEN."

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—Your correspondent "J. B. G." is evidently not an organist, nor does he know much about music, or he would not write as he does. "Amen" simply means "So be it," and it is a sort of epitome or condensation of what has been said or sung before; it signifies that what has been said or sung by us, or by some one else for us, meets with our entire sanction and approval. I suppose your correspondent never says Amen after the Lord's Prayer, or after the Gloria Patri—but perhaps he has not heard of the latter. Thorough musicians feel that the hymn wants finish without Amen. There is a sense of something wanting, and only persons of refined taste can understand that feeling as of something missed. Of course Amen is older than the Ritualists, and if "J. B. G." thinks that the Ritualists are going to have everything that is beautiful and no one else, he is very much mistaken. They have beautiful music, thinking, and thinking rightly, that nothing can be too beautiful for the worship of the Almighty; and it is by such ridiculous practices as leaving out "Amen" at the end of hymns that some Nonconformist places of worship are deserted by young people. And no wonder. If they will lag behind the times, so much the worse for them. When "Amen" is not sung at the end of a hymn, it always seems as if the people are afraid, or do not care to endorse what they have been singing. Evangelical places of worship have nothing to fear from an ornate musical service, but they have everything to fear from the narrow and prejudiced mind of the unrefined.—Yours faithfully,  
A LONDON GRADUATE.

### CHOIR COMPETITIONS.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—I agree with your correspondent, "F. W.," that friendly Choir Competitions are both interesting and useful. They are interesting, because they give rise to a friendly rivalry between competing choirs, and are useful because they give a healthy stimulus to congregational singing, and tend to raise the standard of musical taste and culture. It would be gratifying if such competitions were more frequent in our Nonconformist churches.

Perhaps no better example has been shown in this direction than by the committee of the Barbour Scheme for the Promotion of Musical Education in Paisley. The directors of that scheme, in an endeavour to stimulate a higher ideal in church music have, in addition to other sections of their scheme for this year, arranged a "Church Choir Competition," after the following terms, viz. :—

1. Each choir to consist of mixed voices and number not less than sixteen—including conductor—all to be *bona-fide* members of the church choir competing.
2. Requirements for examination—(a) a prescribed chorus; (b) a congregational anthem or Scripture sentence, and a tune to 16 lines of a psalm, chosen and prepared by the choir; (c) singing at sight a short anthem approved of by the examiner.



3. The examination by be conducted by musical gentlemen of eminence not connected with the town.

4. A prize of a fixed sum of money to be awarded to the choir obtaining the highest number of marks, and premiums to each of the other choirs competing, according to the number of marks obtained.

Should your correspondent wish further information on the subject, I have no doubt he may obtain a prospectus of the scheme from Mr. James Parlane (of Messrs. F. and R. Parlane, publishers, Paisley), the secretary to the committee.

The benefits to be derived by the churches from the services of an able and earnest choir are so obvious, that it is passing strange more interest is not taken by them in organising such competitions.—I am, etc.,

C. E. McC.

### THE CHORAL FESTIVAL OF PRESBYTERIAN CHOIRS.

*To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.*

SIR,—Referring to the excellent report of the "Service of Praise" of the "Presbyterian Church of England Association of North London Choirs" in your last issue (p. 40), permit me to say that, although this festival was the *first* of the newly-formed Association, it is really the *third* of its kind. In 1886, at the invitation of the Highbury congregation, a united service of praise was held in their church, which I had the honour of conducting. In the following year a similar service was held, under the *bâton* of Mr. H. L. Fulkerson, precentor of Regent-square Church. Although comparatively few choirs took part in these two festivals, they were so successful and created so much interest and enthusiasm that when the question of their continuance arose it was thought desirable to induce a larger number of choirs to join the movement, and thus widen the interest and influence already existing. Accordingly, in September last, a pleasant meeting of the organists and choirmasters of twelve of our churches was held under the general chairmanship of one of our most respected elders, Mr. Robert Wales (our President for this year), when the Association was duly formed. The result has been that a much larger number of voices took part in the recent festival, and with a corresponding increase of interest and enjoyment to all who were present. I may add that at the preliminary meeting the church where the festival was to be held was balloted for, to avoid any heartburnings, a precedent which I hope will be followed in the future, those only being proposed which are convenient of access and suitable for a large body of voices.

It may possibly interest some of your readers if I append our "constitution," which is as follows:—

"Constitution of the Association: (1) The Association shall be called 'The Presbyterian Church of England Association of North London Choirs'; (2) The objects of the Association shall be the improvement of the Service of Praise and the promotion of fraternal sympathy and co-operation amongst the associated choirs; (3) The affairs of the Association shall be conducted by a Council, consisting of two delegates from each choir, one of whom shall be the organist or choirmaster; (4) The officers of the Association shall consist of a President (who need not necessarily be a delegate), a Vice-President, and a Secretary and Treasurer; (5) A united service of praise shall be held at least once a year in such church as may be agreed upon."

I may mention that it is proposed to elect annually a prominent layman to the office of President; the choir delegates—by which the rank and file of the choirs are represented on the Council—are, of course,

chosen by their own comrades; and there is a small executive committee.

I heartily commend your closing paragraph to the consideration of ministers, influential laymen, and to my brother organists in *all* the churches—not only in the metropolis, but in other towns and neighbourhoods, in the hope that those who have the inclination and the opportunity, may be induced to "go and do likewise."—Yours faithfully,

F. G. EDWARDS,  
Vice-president, Presbyterian Church of England  
Association of North London Choirs.

### THE "ORDER OF SERVICE."

*To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.*

SIR,—I have been waiting to see the result of the inquiry by "Musicus" respecting the "Order of service" before I decided to contribute on the subject.

I may intimate that I hold the dual appointment of organist and choirmaster to a country Congregational church in Lancashire. Our existing order of service seems to correspond with that in fairly general use in many of the churches of our denomination. We have an Introit, chant, four hymns, two prayers, two lessons, sermon, and Benediction. On special occasions we omit one hymn and substitute an anthem of considerable dimensions, and instead of the voluntary during the collection, we sing the offertory sentences.

In my own church, and in the neighbourhood and adjacent counties, the feeling has become apparent that this order of service is not satisfactory to all, and this is also manifested in the letters that have appeared in your Journal. Many suggestions have been made. Some want the Lord's Prayer, others want to sing the "Amen." The singing of anthems is also proposed. After many years' experience and careful consideration, I have come to regard these things as a sort of "beating about the bush." To me it is clear that the time is near, or has arrived, when our services should be modified, and that, at the least, a semi-liturgical order of service ought to be arranged for our use. The reasons for this have already been given by Mr. Fitch and others. I know perfectly well that there is a goodly number of people who are not willing to make any concession to us in this matter. They regard with a sort of armed suspicion any attempted introduction of the elements above referred to. They carry with them a most effective weapon for these cases, particularly if the church happens to be financially weak. This is the threat to leave.

Now, with regard to going to church, I take it that we meet to worship God; we therefore assemble to pray, praise, to be exhorted and instructed in matters pertaining to our spiritual welfare. In my opinion, we are fairly well provided for in all except the first-named. In most of our churches this is entirely in the hands of the minister, and any praying that we do in our acts of public worship must be done mentally. I, and many others in our locality, desire to be able to take an active and *audible* part during public prayers in church. With a view to this, we some time ago arranged an order of service which allowed of this participation. I here detail it for your interested readers:—Introit; (free) short prayer, ending with Our Lord's Prayer in monotone; hymn; first lesson; chant; short meditation (organ played very softly); second lesson; hymn; (free) prayer ("Amen" sung); hymn (or anthem, when desired); devotional service from Rev. John Hunter's book, with musical response; sermon; hymn; Benediction ("Amen" sung).

Here we have a service, simple, yet effective, in which all could take part. Yet some took offence and threatened to leave if it was perpetuated. It was too "Churchy," they said. To be brief, we gave way. But I, for one, was satisfied that we have at our disposal

the requisites for a really excellent and devotional order of service, if we can only be brought to avail ourselves of them. As against the Church of England's two services (morning and evening), Mr. Hunter provides us with thirteen or fourteen. These might be used as I have indicated above. Those who do not think and feel as we do, say it is all form, but it is not so to us. I will not pursue the subject further at present, but I should like to say that I quite agree with J.B.G.'s sensible letter in your last issue respecting the singing of "Amen." During my visits to churches where they sing it at the close of the hymns, I have sometimes noticed that, in the event of a curtailment of some of the hymns, the "Amen" has been extremely inappropriate, and would have been better omitted. Last autumn I went to one of our churches, and found that they had ceased to chant, and taken to singing the "Amen" at the end of each hymn. I felt this to be a decided loss to the service. Personally, I am not in favour of regular and systematic anthem-singing, unless they can be well sung. In a very large number of our country churches, I think there is no possibility of anything like general singing of anthems for years to come. I therefore advocate a modification of our services to something like the line I have suggested. It is simple and reasonable, and really no more "Churchy" than singing anthems by Stainer, Hopkins, and others, or chants by Boyce or Tallis. Yours faithfully,

ONWARD.

#### MINISTERS AS CHOIRMASTERS.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—Mr. Halsey is a very able advocate, but I fear he will have hard work to prove his case to the satisfaction of either his brother ministers or the leaders of our church music. I do not believe ministers wish to interfere with the musical arrangements. They very rightly remember the saying, "Every man to his trade," and it is far better for the labour to be divided than for the minister to undertake the double duties.

Mr. Halsey seems to think that unless the minister has entire control of the music the choir set up a kind of opposition attraction. Surely this is anything but general. Where such a thing takes place, the sooner the better the organist and choir are dismissed, for unless the leaders of the music are willing to work in perfect harmony with the minister, and endeavour to make their music appropriate to the subject of the sermon, they are not fitted for their position.

But having procured friends for the choir, who are in full sympathy with the work of the minister, he will certainly find that it adds to the comfort of all parties by confining himself to the special duties of his calling, and leave the music in abler hands.

Yours truly, CHOIRMASTER.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—I have read the Rev. J. Halsey's views on the musical service, but cannot understand why a ministerial choirmaster should be superior, or even preferable.

In the first place, a minister's time and attention are fully occupied in connection with his ordinary duties during the church service, without having to attend to the choir, though he might be competent to do so.

A choirmaster who is not a minister is by far the better person, inasmuch as he has nothing but the choir to attend to during the service. Further, if the system were adopted generally, ministers would not be able to give their spiritual duties that close and undivided attention which they are able to do at present. Spiritual matters or the choir must be secondary, and if the latter, there is the danger of the choir falling short of that which they might attain

under the careful training and tuition of an independent choirmaster.

In reference to the tunes, etc., harmonizing with the sermon and other portions of the service, I cannot see any difficulty. The minister should apprise the choirmaster of the hymns he wishes sung, some days previously, who would then be able to select suitable tunes; and further, the minister, if he is anxious that perfect harmony should exist throughout the whole service, would disclose the subject of his address. This would bring minister and choirmaster closer together, and promote a friendly spirit and good-will toward each other, and we should not then hear anything more of petty tyranny.

I have had experience with different ministers, some of whom have regularly furnished particulars of their hymns, etc., in time for the week-night choir practice. A new hymn or tune not frequently required has then been properly worked up for the service; the minister has also stated the subject of his address. The service has, therefore, been what it should be, and if this plan were adopted generally there would not be the slipshod performances complained of. It is only when sufficient notice is not given that this occurs, as when the hymns are handed in a few minutes before the service commences, and no information furnished respecting the sermon.

There are some ministers who do not appear to know what hymns, etc., they are going to have until the last minute, and therefore cannot, of course, let the choirmaster know. I do not think in their case there is much to complain of, even if the service is "jiggity-joggity."

As regards the singing gallery being sweet on a new tune or anthem, the difficulty could be easily overcome by mutual arrangement.

There is no doubt that some ministers would like to have the singing in their own hands, but we think their labours would be more successful and beneficial if they confined themselves to their own sphere.

Yours truly, J. H. C.

#### Reviews.

*Behold, How Good and Joyful.* Anthem composed by C. E. Juleff. Price 4d. Novello and Co.—Mr. Juleff is an accomplished composer of Church music. This anthem contains variety and is effective.

*"I will Magnify Thee, O God, my King."* Psalm cxlv. Composed by A. Hemstock. Price 2s. 6d. Novello and Co.—Choir-masters will find this a very useful addition to their repertory. It contains no serious difficulties, and is well within the capabilities of most choirs. If too long for an ordinary service, parts of it might be taken.

*Psalms and Canticles set to Appropriate Chants.* Price One Shilling. The Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, 2 Castle Street, City Road, E.C.—This neat little book of 107 pages has been prepared for use in Methodist congregations, and ought to command a large sale. The pointing is simple, but sufficiently explicit to enable congregations to sing correctly. The music has been very judiciously chosen by Mr. C. J. Dale. No complaint can be made on the ground of want of variety, for four double and three single chants are given to each Psalm. Two service settings of the *Te Deum* are given, viz., Boyce in A and Jackson in F. We hoped the latter had seen its day, and we doubt if the former will be of much general use, owing to its unsuitability for congregational singing. The book is clearly printed, and should certainly promote good chanting in the Wesleyan churches.

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